

From: M Ewing
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/7/01 1:06pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To the Department of Justice:

I would like to point out the great importance of the eventual Microsoft Settlement to higher education, as well as to the general public interest. As I understand the current focus, the settlement mainly addresses the rights of Microsoft's competitors. It is possible that the choices available to higher education and the public will actually be reduced under the current Settlement, because critical information will be withheld from developers of Open Source software. Open Source as an alternative to Microsoft products is particularly important in higher education.

Many of Microsoft's major "competitors" are in the Open Software arena, which provides such products as the Apache web server, SAMBA file sharing, and the Linux operating system. The volunteer groups that provide this software are critically dependent on access to the Microsoft APIs and other information that may be provided under this Settlement.

In order to serve the public interest and to redress Microsoft's violations of law, I believe the Settlement should require Microsoft not only to disclose APIs and related information to "qualified" competitor firms, but to disclose them to the public at large. This is the only way that the needs of the open software community can be fairly addressed.

Thank you for your consideration.

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CC: MSE